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Report of the Economic and Social Council

Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001

Analysis of the organizational structure and the personnel and technical resources of the Non-Governmental Organizations Section of the United Nations Secretariat

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the report of the Secretary-General on the analysis of the organizational structure and the personnel and technical resources of the Non-Governmental Organizations Section of the United Nations Secretariat (A/54/520). The report was submitted pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1999/34 of 28 July 1999, in which the Secretary-General was requested to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session an analysis of the structure and resources of the Section commensurate with the increased workload and the level of responsibility necessary to implement the Secretariat's mandate as contained in Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996, parts X and XI. During its consideration of the report, the Advisory Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information.

2. As indicated in paragraph 2 of the report, since the issuance in 1998 of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Non-Governmental Organizations Section (E/1998/43 and Corr.1), 582 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been granted consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, bringing the total to 1,938. This has led to an increase in the volume of work of the Section that is reflected in every aspect of its activities. The Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations has also had to extend the length of its resumed sessions to accommodate its increased workload. The Advisory Committee notes that the number of meetings originally forecast for the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations in the programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 has already doubled.

3. The Advisory Committee points out that the issue analysed in the report had been brought to the attention of the General Assembly in paragraphs IV.10 and IV.11 of the first report of the Advisory Committee on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999,[1] as approved by the Assembly in its resolution 52/220 of 22 December 1997, and again in paragraph IV.16 of its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001.[2] In the latter, the Committee stated that the matter had not been addressed by the Secretariat and reiterated its view that the time had come to appraise the impact on the United Nations programme budget of the large increase in NGOs involved in the work of the United Nations, since administration and cost implications would

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become more critical in view of the financial constraints facing the Organization.

4. The Advisory Committee is of the view that the matter has been procedurally mishandled by the Secretariat and that there was a lack of coordination between Secretariat units. The substantive aspects of the report should have been submitted to the Third Committee of the General Assembly; however, the report was issued only after the conclusion of the work of the Third Committee at the main part of the fifty-fourth session, thereby making full consideration of it at the fifty-fourth session impracticable.

5. Furthermore, the Advisory Committee notes that the conclusion in paragraph 29 of the report is inconsistent with the findings of the report. No proposals are put forward to address the issues raised in the report, in particular with regard to the number and level of posts in the Section.

6. Accordingly, the Advisory Committee recommends that the Secretary-General address its concerns without further delay, together with the administrative and financial issues raised in document A/54/520, and submit a report thereon to the General Assembly at its resumed fifty-fourth session. The Committee will revisit the issue in the context of that report.

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 7* (A/52/7/Rev.1).

[2] Ibid., *Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 7* (A/54/7).